

MHPG Application Section I.

1. Applicant: City of Helena
2. Property Owner (if different from applicant): _____
3. Authorized Representative of Applicant: Pam Attardo Title: Heritage Preservation Officer
Address: 316 N. Park Ave. City: Helena Zip Code: 59623
Phone: 447-8357 E-mail: pattardo@lccountymt.gov
4. Primary Contact: Same as above Title: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ Zip Code: _____
Phone: _____ E-mail: _____
5. Project Type: Please select one type under the appropriate eligible project type

☒ Historic Site: ☒ Infrastructure Maintenance ☒ Building Code Issue
☐ Security ☐ Climate Control ☐ Fire Protection

Historical Society: ☐ Infrastructure ☐ Maintenance ☐ Building Code Issue
☐ Security ☐ Climate Control ☐ Fire Protection

History Museum: ☐ Infrastructure ☐ Maintenance ☐ Building Code Issue
☐ Security ☐ Climate Control ☐ Fire Protection

5. Grant Funding Request Information Amount Requested: \$ <u>25,226</u> Total Amount of Leverage: \$ <u>156,774</u> Total Project Cost: \$ <u>182,000</u>			6. Project Address: Physical Address: <u>111 S. Cruse Ave.</u> City: <u>Helena</u>	
7. Funding Sources				
Source	Type of Funds	Amount	Status of Commitment (provide documentation as applicable)	Rates and Terms (if applicable)
MT Historic Preservation Grant	Grant	25,266	Applying	
Revitalizing MT's Rural Heritage Grant (RMRH)	Grant	70,000	Rec'd invitation to submit Part 2	

Friends of the Fire Tower	Donation	80,000	Pledges will be called in based on grant awards	
Helena Soroptimists	Donation	2,774		
Jerry Metcalf Foundation	Grant	4,000	Awarded 2018 to Friends of the Fire Tower	

8. Brief Description of current project and proposed solution or activity to be completed

a. *Background and project (please provide narrative response):*

The project will rehabilitate Helena's 1874 historic Fire Tower, which is a contributing property to both the Helena and South-Central Historic Districts. It is located in Fire Tower Park on Cruse Avenue, a prominent spot above downtown, and is within the jurisdiction of Helena's City Parks and Recreation Department. The Fire Tower is inextricably tied to the City's identity, and appears in its official logo and seal. It is nationally unique and significant as an urban fire tower (as opposed to forest lookouts) that has survived since 1874, and locals and visitors alike are intrigued by and drawn to it. Its commanding location on a bluff above Last Chance Gulch is hard to ignore, and it invites curiosity about its origin and function. It is one of the last vestiges of Helena's gold camp era, and its presence evokes a sense of place in Helena's largely intact historic Western downtown.

The Fire Tower has been maintained by City Parks to the best of its abilities over the years, but not in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior Standards ("Standards"). As a result, maintenance methods have inadvertently resulted in accelerated decay of the tower's base timbers, as well as structural instability due to shortening of timbers in attempts to remove decay. Well-meaning reconstructions of the upper part of the tower utilized pressure-treated lumber and resulted in historically inaccurate reproduction in Standards-incompatible materials. These conditions came to the City's attention in August 2016 when an arson event charred a sill and leg of the tower, and the Helena/Lewis and Clark County Heritage and Tourism Development Council (a joint City-County advisory board) and the non-profit Montana Preservation Alliance offered assistance with evaluating the structure. Subsequent analyses and reports showed that significant repair was needed that was beyond City Park's expertise and repair/maintenance budget.

Since its earliest days, the tower has been an iconic symbol of the City. The tower was built to house a watchman from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. Upon sighting evidence of fire, the watchman would ring the bell beneath the tower's cabin and alert firefighters. The Fire Tower represents the City's survival of numerous catastrophic fires in its early days, and is extremely significant to the community. It is akin to what headframes signify to Butte; it is fundamental to Helena's

sense of place, and has been featured in the City's logo and seal for decades. The "Atlas Obscura" tourism website and publication lists the tower as one of the last of its kind in the U.S., and the 1970 publication "Fire Tower Hill" states that it was one of 5 of its kind in the U.S at that time. Considering the rarity of this urban fire tower, its loss through neglect or environmental damage would be significant not only to Helena and Montana, but to the nation.

b. *Description of proposed solution (please provide narrative response):*

The goal of this project is to rehabilitate the Fire Tower in accordance with the Standards. The proposed work will 1) upgrade foundational elements to resist overturning from wind or seismic events; 2) correct unsafe connections and decay that have left the tower unstable; 3) replace missing timbers shown in historic photographs; 4) replace 3 historic timbers that have decayed beyond repair with in-kind timbers; 5) remove historically insensitive pressure-treated members and stairs and replace with historically sensitive materials; 6) replace the current historically incorrect upper watchman cabin to its historic design and materials (it is currently pressure-treated wood); and 7) return the tower to its historic appearance based on photographs.

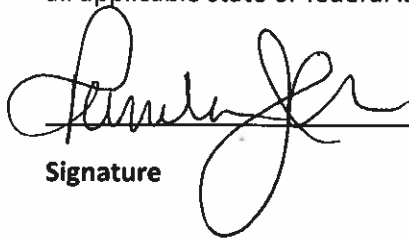
Funding this project will allow the physical work of a rehabilitation process that began in 2016 after the above-described arson event. In 2017, the tower was evaluated by Beaudette Consulting Engineers, then a Missoula-based structural engineering company (now DCI Bozeman) with significant historic preservation experience, and a report was prepared ("BCE Report"). The City hired Anthony & Associates, Inc. wood scientists in July 2019 to evaluate each timber and prepare a report ("Anthony Report"; collectively, with the BCE Report, the "Reports"). The Reports recommended rehabilitation that would retain and repair the historic architectural features of the tower. All work recommended in the Reports is based on the Standards, and the work will be performed in-place and with in-kind materials as best preservation practices dictate.

The Anthony Report states that most timbers can be repaired with Standards-compliant traditional construction/repair methods, e.g., scarfed splices and dutchman. Over the years, many timbers were shortened from repairs that removed decay, resulting in loss of connection between members. Steel plates and non-Standards-compliant methods were used to support the tower, and these introduced new issues, such as water entrapment behind the steel that exacerbated wood decay. Similar problems were caused by the application of elastomeric sealant to fill seasoning checks and decayed areas of the timber; this resulted in water retention and accelerated decay. This project will repair the tenons at connections that are not sufficiently intact using Standards-compliant timber framing to lengthen timbers and strengthen connections. It will also remove sealant and replace decay voids with in-kind wood dutchman.

The project will first address the portion of the Fire Tower below the octagonal cabin that historically housed the fire watchman. Once this portion is complete, work will progress to restoration of the octagonal cabin (including historic windows, door and railing) to its historic configuration and wood species (Douglas fir). A number of architectural details missing from the original design of the tower, such as the 15' flagpole atop the cabin, timbers, and wood splints will be restored. These details are well documented by historic photographs as well as physical evidence (e.g., "ghosts" of wood splints on existing braces).

9. Certification to Submit:

The undersigned authorized representative hereby certifies that (a) the information set forth in this application is correct to the best of his/her knowledge; (b) s/he has received, read, and understood these guidelines and agrees to comply with all requirements; (c) the elected officials of the local government have formally authorized the submittal of this application, as applicable; (d) s/he has the authority to act on behalf of the applicant in submitting this application, and (e) agrees to comply with all applicable state or federal laws and statutes associated with carrying out the project.

 2/28/2022 Pamela J. Attardo Heritage Preservation Officer
Signature Date Printed Name and Title

MHPG Application Section II.

Applicants are required to provide narrative responses to each of the statutory criteria, unless otherwise specifically permitted.

STATUTORY CRITERIA - A

up to 150 in Possible Points

The degree to which a project supports economic stimulus or economic activity, including job creation and work creation for Montana contractors and service workers.

As applicable to the proposed project, address the following in your response:

- I. Describe how your project will have an economic impact in the following areas:
 - job creation for Montana contractors, service workers, and other related jobs;
 - local economy and;
 - increased tourism.

This project will create jobs for a Montana contractor who will upgrade the Fire Tower's foundational elements, a Montana structural engineering firm and a historic preservation timber framing contractor and crew of four. The Montana Preservation Alliance may also be involved with the rehabilitation based on its familiarity with the project and significant experience with similar projects. The project is expected to take 8-12 weeks from start to finish for repairs to the timber portion of the Fire Tower below the watchman's cabin as well as rebuilding the historically insensitive watchman cabin and stairs.

The Fire Tower is one of Helena's most iconic historic features, and is a major tourist attraction in the Helena/South-Central Historic Districts. It is one of the most frequently featured landmarks in Helena's online and printed tourism materials, and the funding of this project will ensure its continued existence as a significant contributor to the Districts. The rehabilitation of the Fire Tower, along with other measures being pursued by the City in the planning documents

described below, will have the cumulative effect of improving Helena's heritage tourism appeal and result in increased tourism.

As noted the planning materials discussed below, better wayfinding and interpretation, improved walking tours and sensitive rehabilitation of historic structures, along with targeted marketing touting historic Helena's historic sense of place, are actions that feed increased tourism. Historic preservation has proven crucial to every successful downtown revitalization effort in the United States, and Helena would be no exception. The City's commitment to this project will serve as an example to the community, underscore the importance of preservation in Helena and potentially catalyze other preservation projects.

Many Helena businesses have tied into the Fire Tower's cachet and appeal as a marketing strategy. Even the now-defunct Helena foundry Caird Engineering created cast iron storm water covers that featured a bas-relief of the "Guardian of the Gulch", the Fire Tower's affectionate nickname. Some businesses have incorporated the Fire Tower into their name, and others feature the Fire Tower in merchandise, including art, gin and coffee. Historic themed items never seem to lose their appeal with a diverse array of demographics. The persistence and nationwide popularity of vintage shops and goods is an example of this phenomenon.

Helena's local economy benefits from downtown's historic appeal as well as proximity to historic neighborhoods, some of which are National Register historic districts, and others which have yet to be recognized. These historic assets often figure into newcomers' decisions to move to Helena. Downtown's buildings, which host a mix of office, retail, entertainment and residential uses, have retained their pedestrian-oriented design that invites passers-by inside. The uniqueness of Helena's buildings attracts visitors to downtown and its myriad unique shops and businesses, stimulating both the local and state economies. The combination of downtown's pedestrian atmosphere and the proximity of neighborhoods surrounding downtown results in a high walkability score that is an asset to marketing Helena as a livable place, thereby increasing both local and state tax bases.

The Fire Tower is a prominent feature during the holiday season, which is one of the downtown commercial district's busiest and most lucrative periods. The Helena Downtown Business Improvement District's lighting of the Fire Tower the day after Thanksgiving is a kick-off for the holiday season and a boon to merchants along Last Chance Gulch. The importance of the Fire Tower to "The Parade of Lights" cannot be underestimated. This event features a parade down the Gulch to the Fire Tower, where a switch is flipped, illuminating the Fire Tower illuminated with twinkling strings of lights. An illustration of the Fire Tower's pivotal role in this event became clear in 2017 and 2018, when the City did not light the Fire Tower due to the structural instability revealed after the 2016 arson event. The tower was instead illuminated by spotlights, which was not well received by the community. In 2019, local businesses and community members and the Helena Fire Department worked with City Parks to bring a lift truck in to string traditional holiday lights on the tower, much to the delight of the community.

As noted above, the Fire Tower is an integral element of Helena's historic identity. Its absence would leave a huge void in downtown from a local, state and tourism standpoint. The health and vitality and sense of place created by historic districts are based upon each of the

contributing properties' continued existence. Visitors come to downtown Helena for the total historic sensory experience, and end up staying in hotels and shopping and dining here. If structures are not maintained and are allowed to decay and fall down, what once pulled people in will no longer exist, and that portion of Helena's economy will dry up. For these reasons, as well as preservation of Helena's and Montana's heritage, it is very important that the Fire Tower be properly repaired and maintained. It is the City's goal, along with the Helena/Lewis and Clark County Heritage Preservation and Tourism Development Council ("Heritage Tourism Council", a certified local government under Montana's Community Preservation program) and others, to make the Fire Tower more accessible after its rehabilitation and to create and install interpretive signage that will allow visitors to more fully experience and understand Helena's and Montana's history. Other entities are also on board to help with these goals, including the Friends of the Fire Tower and the Montana Wilderness Association, whose historic Bluestone House is located next to the tower.

2. Describe how your project relates to community goals and previous or concurrent planning efforts (downtown revitalization plan, growth policy, historic preservation plan, economic development strategy, etc.).

Four months after the August 2016 arson event, the City authorized a structural engineering report from a firm without historic preservation experience, and the Montana Preservation Alliance (MPA) offered to assist the City with options for the tower. In February 2017, City Parks announced it would demolish the tower and replace it with a replica. This announcement was met with public outcry. The City began the historic demolition review process required by its ordinance. Discussions among the Heritage Tourism Council, the MPA, County, City and the public resulted in the BCE Report (May 2017), but no decision was made regarding the tower's fate. In March 2018, concerned citizens formed Friends of the Fire Tower, with a goal of raising funds to repair the tower in accordance with the Standards. In late June 2019, City Parks announced it would repair the tower. Wood scientists inspected the tower in July, and the Anthony Report was prepared in September 2019.

Meanwhile, the tower remains unstable and susceptible to wind or seismic damage. City Parks fears that it could fall over or tumble down the steep embankment upon which it is located, resulting in a total loss, but does not have sufficient funds to properly repair it. If the project does not move forward, the tower will continue to decay. The City will continue to perform maintenance, but cannot commit to costly stabilizing repairs.

The City Parks Department has been considering options for repair of the Fire Tower since the 2016 fire inspection identified its considerable deficiencies. After considering several options, City Parks chose rehabilitation as its goal in 2019. This choice has been supported by the Heritage Tourism Council, Friends of the Fire Tower, and many others. The City's proposal in February 2017 to demolish the Fire Tower and replace it with a new version was met with significant public outcry, and resulted in the forming of the non-profit Friends of the Fire Tower, whose goal was to raise money that would allow for rehabilitation in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. It is fair to say that a significant majority of the community favors the rehabilitation goal. Since 2017, a structural analysis and report by Beaudette Consulting Engineers (formerly of Missoula, and now DCI Bozeman) and the Montana Preservation Alliance, as well as a wood scientist's analysis of the tower's timbers have been performed.

This project relates to the community's goals and the City's previous as well as concurrent planning efforts enumerated in the following documents, which were the result of much community input and discussion:

a. City Parks Master Plan Draft (2018)

City Park's Master Plan recommends that City Parks "focus short-term strategies towards maintenance of aging or distressed components in the park system." The rehabilitation of the Fire Tower will implement this recommendation, as the Fire Tower's condition has reached a critical point. The Plan also proposes a Parks Department Administrative Partnership Policy with private, non-profit or other governmental entities for the development, design, construction and operation of recreational facilities and/or programs on City property. City Parks' partnership with the Heritage Tourism Council and Friends of the Fire Tower may be the first implementation of this policy. City Parks' Master Plan also recommends that "interpretive signage and programs be enhanced", and the planned installation of interpretive signage and improvement of access to the Fire Tower discussed above will be further application of the plan.

b. Helena/Lewis and Clark County Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan

This plan, drafted by the Heritage Tourism Council, notes that City and County planning documents (comprehensive plans, growth policies, etc.) make it clear that historic resource retention is considered an important activity. It also notes that Helena tourism and promotional groups and institutions point to historic structures and the historic quality of the city as an attribute, which links economic development and community development interests to historic preservation.

One of the Heritage Tourism Council's goals in the plan is to "physically improve or stabilize sites so they may be retained and put to use, either as sites to visit . . . or sites in everyday domestic or commercial use." The plan discusses several techniques that can be used achieve this goal, including: 1) educational techniques to provide historic preservation to the public; 2) economic techniques - working with tools and trends to encourage the use and protection of historic places; 3) heritage tourism options, including promotional and developmental opportunities open to sites based on their attraction attributes (location, setting, accessibility, theme, condition, adaptive qualities, ownership, iconic values, partnership possibilities, etc.); 4) restoration techniques – methods tied directly to the physical improvement or stabilization of techniques; and 5) public support techniques, including fundraising and/or other means of uniting public interest on behalf of historic places.

Rehabilitation of the Fire Tower would further the Heritage Tourism Council's goal of physically improving an historic site so it could be retained and put to use as a site to visit, i.e., as a tourism generator with economic impacts. All of the techniques outlined in the plan would be actively put to use in this project, as it will include or lead to restoration, fundraising, heritage tourism and public education through interpretation of the Fire Tower in Helena's history.

c. Helena Downtown Neighborhood Plan (fka Downtown Master Plan)

The 2016 Helena Downtown Neighborhood Plan identifies historic properties critical to Downtown's economic health and its broader importance in Helena and Montana as a whole. It points out that historic preservation has proven crucial to every successful downtown

revitalization effort in the United States, and breaks downtown into three sections, the Great Northern District, the Last Chance Gulch Retail Core, and the Fire Tower District, the latter which is envisioned as a “hub of entertainment, recreation, history, arts and culture.” The plan notes that the “Last Chance Gulch retail core invites citizens and visitors into downtown for a unique experience with historic architecture and its traditional main street character and charm.” It identifies the downtown Business Improvement District as “essentially an historic downtown commercial neighborhood that it is integral to the history not just of the local area but of the State of Montana.” One of the five Implementation Actions set out in the plan is “Capitalize on Downtown’s Historic Assets – promote historic preservation.” In addition to the conservation of existing resources, the plan calls for a collaboration to improve the historic walking tour by connecting points of interest, public art, and other pedestrian attractions. The improvements to the landmark Fire Tower would enable the City to preserve this asset better and make it available as a tourist attraction for years to come.

d. Helena Downtown Urban Renewal Plan (2019)

The City recently created a Downtown Urban Renewal District, with the goal that Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds generated in the district would be available to invest in public infrastructure in this area. The Fire Tower is located on Cruse Avenue, which is within the TIF district. Both the Downtown Neighborhood Plan and the Downtown Urban Renewal Plan identify Cruse Avenue as an area prime for redevelopment, and note the mix of office, retail, entertainment, and to a lesser extent, residential uses in the area. The Urban Renewal Plan cites the area as the “most pedestrian-friendly commercial-retail district in the City.” Both plans call for redesigning Cruse to become more of a “complete street” and to develop the underutilized properties along Cruse to enable more mixed-use buildings and housing. Any improvements to the Fire Tower itself will only enhance these efforts.

The new **Downtown and Transitional Zoning (2019)** in the area is designed to honor the historic buildings and features of the Downtown and surrounding area. The restoration of the Fire Tower will complement these efforts.

e. Helena Growth Policy 2019 Draft

The 2019 draft of the Growth Policy underscores the importance of Helena’s history and its preservation. “A vital, active downtown, rich in history and a source of intense community pride” is one of eight elements of its community vision for which it strives to be recognized. The Fire Tower is an integral source of that intense pride. Among the policy’s objectives the following are included: 1) sustaining and expanding Helena’s historical assets; 2) sustaining the historic downtown as the “heart” of Helena, bringing the community together and enhancing its commercial, service and civic vitality; 3) working to preserve or mitigate the potential loss of historic, cultural or aesthetically-significant features, boosting overall economic vitality, tourism and local quality of life, including buildings, districts or objects of historic significance.

Almost every chapter in the plan references Helena’s history or historic assets: 1) the Land Use chapter states that Helena’s future land use strategy identifies historic districts and aids in their vitality and prosperity and encourages infill development and rehabilitation of historic structures; 2) the Housing chapter acknowledges strong public support for the preservation of existing neighborhoods, and states that it aims to balance the preservation of existing housing (and its unique, often historic character) with the fresh energies that growth brings; 3) the Transportation chapter acknowledges the importance of historic preservation, and its goals and objectives include developing and enhancing a transportation system in Helena that

"respects the area's natural and historic context", and preferring transportation designs that are compatible with historic resources; 4) the Community Culture & Design chapter, which is primarily dedicated to Helena's historic resources, specifically outlines Helena's historic resources, facilities and programs, and its goals and objectives, which include a) maintaining city parks and open spaces; b) promoting the economic and social vitality of historic districts; and c) coordinating historic and pre-historic preservation issues with land-use planning and decision-making.

Rehabilitation of the Fire Tower clearly aligns with the policy's objectives of sustaining and expanding Helena's historical assets, preserving the historic downtown "heart", and preserving/mitigating the potential loss of historic, cultural or aesthetically-significant features. The policy recognizes that these buildings, districts or objects of historic significance boost Helena's overall economic vitality, tourism and local quality of life.

STATUTORY CRITERIA - B

up to 200 in Possible Points

The degree to which the project activity can demonstrate the purpose and need. This includes the relevancy of whether the project activity provides features that establish or enhance security, climate control, or fire protection for museums or address infrastructure, maintenance, or building code issues for museums, historical societies, or historic sites.

As applicable to the proposed project, address the following in your response:

1. Describe the current use and condition of the historic resource.
2. Describe the deficiency the proposed project will address and how this has impacted the historic resource. Please also explain the duration of time the deficiency has existed.
3. Describe how the proposed project will address the identified deficiency.
4. Describe how receiving MHPG funding will enable proper completion of the proposed project and enable the long-term financial stability of the resource.
5. Describe how the proposed project was selected and prioritized in relation to plans to preserve and maintain the historic resource.

1.-5. The Fire Tower currently serves as Helena's official symbol and a reminder of the City's historic origins. It has been touted as a tourist attraction for years, but has not served in its historic capacity as a fire watchtower and bell tower since the 1890s, when an automated fire alarm system made it obsolete. The tower subsequently served as a curfew bell for Helena's children up until the early 1930s, and eventually fell into disrepair. Beginning in 1939, community efforts to repair the tower have sprung up and revived it. These well-intended efforts and City maintenance kept the tower standing, but were performed before the Standards existed (1962) or in non-compliance with the Standards (1990). This legacy has resulted in the Fire Tower's current poor condition. The response in Section I, question 8 b. of this application, and the proposed solutions contained therein, gives a good summary of the extent of work that is required to bring the Fire Tower to a Standards-compliant preservation baseline. The Fire Tower most likely had four base sills that were

secured to the ground. Only one of those sills, which likely dates to its build date in 1874, is still remaining. Historical photos of the Fire Tower indicate that the other three sills were likely removed in the 1970s and replaced with the current stone foundations. The BCE Report indicates that these are not sufficient to anchor the Fire Tower to its site, and it is in danger of overturning during wind or seismic events. Almost every timber connection in the tower's base needs to be spliced and lengthened to ensure structurally secure connections. The Anthony Report notes that as wood members decayed, the decay was cut off, which shortened the members and weakened connections. Steel plates were then added to strengthen the connections, but ironically this treatment trapped water and exacerbated decay.

Seasoning checks in the tower's timbers, a normal reaction when wood ages, were filled with an elastomeric sealant that allowed the timbers to retain water and accelerate decay. Those seasoning checks that were not filled with the sealant filled up with debris over time, which was not cleaned out manually or with a leaf blower, resulting in additional decay. There are also three large timbers in the southwest corner of the tower that are charred from the 2016 arson event.

Historic photos show that a few timbers are missing, and that the watchman cabin and stairs, which were rebuilt in 1990, do not conform to historic design. Additionally, the cabin and stairs were constructed from non-Standards compliant pressure-treated lumber. The flagpole at the top, which is specifically mentioned in the handwritten contract for the Fire Tower between the City and the original contractors, is currently much shorter than the original fifteen feet specified.

The deficiencies that we see today have existed since at least the 1970s, and as indicated above, were sometimes made worse by incorrect maintenance, repairs or treatments. They have left the Fire Tower in unstable condition, and rendered the upper portion historically inaccurate.

MHPG's funding of this project will provide the additional resources to allow this project to be completed. The City applied for a \$100,000 grant in January 2020 through the Revitalizing Montana's Rural Heritage Project ("RMRH"), and was invited to submit Part 2 of the application. RMRH reduced the requested grant award to \$70,000, which would only allow completion of the higher priority base of the Fire Tower in the absence of additional funding. The reconstruction of the cabin would have to be delayed to a second phase. The project would be more cost-effective if completed in its entirety in one season, as preparations would only need the City would need to be made once, including removing the fence surrounding the Fire Tower, and contractors would need to move timber and equipment, including staging and jacks for shoring and access to the upper parts of the tower's frame, onto the site only once.

Funding of this project would not only allow efficient completion of the project, but an opportunity to train City Parks' staff in proper maintenance and repair of the tower. This approach would extend the impact of repairs and the tower's longevity. This will be the first time that City Parks has embarked on a project of this scale for the Fire Tower. The public response to City Parks' announcement to build a new tower was enough to spur the creation of the non-profit Friends of the Fire Tower, and to raise \$80,000 in pledges before it even formally began a fundraising campaign. These developments show promise that the City may specifically allocate funds for maintenance and periodic repair of the tower that would forestall the tower from ever reaching this point again.

The proposed project was selected and prioritized because it would put the Fire Tower at a preservation baseline, from which proper maintenance and periodic repair should prevent crises like the one the City is currently facing with the tower. The Fire Tower was selected by the Heritage Tourism Council above other preservation projects based on the urgency of the repairs, and the tower's local, statewide and national significance.

The degree to which timing of the project can be completed without delay, including access to matching funds and approval of permits, if needed.

As applicable to the proposed project, address the following in your response:

1. Describe the organization's capacity and ability to complete the proposed project in a timely manner.
2. Describe the status and availability of all matching funds needed to complete the proposed project.
3. Describe how receipt of MHPG funding will enable the ability to leverage additional funding such as grants, loans, and Historic Tax Credits.
4. Describe any potential timeline considerations that are related to permits, environmental considerations or related activities to complete the proposed project.

1.-4. Partners City Parks, the Heritage Tourism Council and Friends of the Fire Tower are poised to begin this project once sufficient funding has been secured. City Parks and the Heritage Tourism Council have undertaken numerous projects, many that are larger and more complex than the Fire Tower, and successfully completed them in a timely manner (e.g., Centennial Park, the Green Meadow Ranch, and projects discussed in the response to Criteria E below). Much of the planning work for the project is complete, as noted in the response to Section 1.

As shown in the table in Section 1 and discussed above in the response to Criteria B, the City anticipates receiving the following matching funds for the project: 1) \$70,000 grant award from the RMRH Project (announced in Spring 2020) ; 2) \$80,000 from Friends of the Fire Tower (pledges will be called in from donors upon receipt of grant funds); 3) \$2,774 from the Helena Soroptimists (available when the project begins); and 4) \$4,000 from the Jerry Metcalf Foundation (held by the Friends of the Fire Tower and available when the project begins).

The receipt of MHPG funding will enable the City to leverage additional funding from the Friends of the Fire Tower and the Soroptimists, who are holding these monies until sufficient grant funding has been received to ensure the completion of the project. The City will not be taking loans to finance the project and is not eligible for Historic Tax Credits.

City Parks and the Heritage Tourism Council have discussed the project with the City Building Division, and a building permit is the only permit that will be required for the project. Cost will be based on the cost of construction, and will be issued within 2 weeks or less if the required plans and information are submitted. The City/County Historic Preservation Officer has determined that the City's Demolition Review Ordinance two-part hearing process does not apply to the project, as the in-place rehabilitation project does not fall within the definition of "demolition" as defined in the ordinance. An historic preservation-experienced structural engineer and preservation timber framer have confirmed that the project can be completed within the grant timeframe.

The degree to which the project activity contributes historic or heritage value related to the state of Montana.

As applicable to the proposed project, address the following in your response:

1. Describe the historical context and significance of the historic resource associated with the proposed project including:
 - Heritage value related to the state of Montana;
 - the value of the resource to the local community; and
 - any relevant designations or listings.
2. Describe how the proposed project will sustain the character defining features and integrity of the historic resource.
3. Describe how the proposed project will help promote and interpret the heritage value of the historic resource.

1.-3. The Fire Tower is one of only a few remaining of its kind in the United States. It was listed on the National Register as a contributing structure to the Helena Historic District in 1972. In 1986, it was listed as a contributing structure to the Helena South-Central Historic District. Its role in Helena's early history cannot be underestimated. Fire was a huge threat to early Helena's existence; the mining camp suffered 9 fires in its first 10 years from 1864-1874, some which destroyed much of its business district and many homes. During pre-railroad days, nearly all supplies had to be freighted overland into Helena from either Fort Benton or Corinne, Utah, and it could take months and significant expense to replace materials after a fire. The wages paid to a tower fire watchman are evidence of the tower's significance to the town; in 1886, pay was a whopping \$75 a month, very good for the times. Fire lookouts were actually among the first public employees in Helena.

The existing tower was completed on April 3, 1874, according to April 4, 1874 article in "The Helena Daily Herald." The City paid \$100 for tower, as evidenced by a handwritten contract that carefully lays out the tower's design specifications. It is the third in a series of fire watch towers that have guarded Last Chance Gulch since the late 1860s. The current tower was constructed with millwright techniques and is characterized by heavy beams secured with bolts. It is of significant historical value in both cultural and technical terms. It is a fine example of folk architecture from Helena's frontier days, and an unusual survivor in an urban setting. Historically, Helena's early city seal was a phoenix, the mythical bird that rose from the ashes of fire to be reborn. The fact that the tower replaced the phoenix in the seal many years ago is a testament to its significance to the community; the tower is a symbol of Helena's perseverance despite years of fires that threatened its existence, as well as a symbol of people rebuilding and starting again despite catastrophe.

Helena was not unique in its susceptibility to fire. Other early Montana towns suffered similar fires, as wooden buildings and canvas tents in close proximity caught fire from wood fires or kerosene lamps, and then quickly spread to surrounding structures. If any other Montana towns had fire towers, none of them have survived like Helena's, and this unique structure merits preservation. The Fire Tower may even have played a role in Helena's selection as the capital of Montana; but for the Fire Tower, early Helena may have burned and been abandoned by its inhabitants.

Most importantly, the proposed project will sustain the character-defining features and integrity of the Fire Tower by restoring its structural integrity and properly securing it to its site. As all work will be

performed in compliance with the Standards, non-historic materials and methods will be replaced by historically appropriate ones, resulting in a more authentic structure with greater historic integrity. Missing features and design will restore the tower to its original appearance, and make it a structure that Helena and the state of Montana can be proud of.

The rehabilitation of the Fire Tower will help promote and interpret its heritage value, as investment in significant properties like the tower signals the state's and Helena's dedication to the preservation of historically important properties. Investment in the tower highlights its significance to the community, including those who are unfamiliar with the role it played in Helena's history, and may spur renewed interest in it by locals and visitors. The City's work on the Fire Tower will be a very obvious role model for preservation of heritage properties, and the rehabilitation process itself can be interpreted and its importance underscored to the public. Media coverage of the restoration and rehabilitation of historic properties generally stirs up increased interest in them and their story, and justifies additional interpretation.

STATUTORY CRITERIA - E

up to 100 in Possible Points

The degree to which the applicant demonstrates successful track record or experience of the organization directing the project or similarly related projects.

As applicable to the proposed project, address the following in your response:

- I. Describe the organizational capacity and experience with similar projects of all project partners. Please identify the entity that will administer the grant.

Helena City Parks and Recreation Department

Helena City Parks and Recreation Department has the organizational capacity and sufficient staff to complete large complex projects, and has completed similar projects in the past. The Park Maintenance Department staff is very competent and possess a variety of skills. Working closely with our partners in historic preservation, the Park Maintenance Department restored the Confederate Fountain in Hill Park in 2000, an original steam engine locomotive in Beattie Park and one of the original trolleys that operated in Helena, now located on the Walking Mall. Park staff also performed the following work on the Fire Tower: 1) rebuilt the bell platform; 2) refurbished the bell; and 3) administered a contract to install cabin roof shingles in compliance with the City's wildlife urban interface ordinance. In terms of capacity for larger projects, the City of Helena has a full legal, finance, engineering and park staff that review and oversee numerous contracts each year. The City works closely with the Helena/Lewis and Clark Co. Heritage Preservation and Tourism Development Council, the Montana Preservation Alliance and the State Historic Preservation Office.

Helena/Lewis and Clark Co. Heritage Preservation and Tourism Development Council

The Heritage Tourism Council will administer the grant with support from the City as needed. The Heritage Tourism Council was created in 1989 by a joint City-County interlocal agreement as the Historic Preservation Commission, and is one of 16 certified local governments recognized by the National Historic Preservation Act. This status allows the Council to receive annual funding passed through the State Historic Preservation Office.

In 2012, the Historic Preservation Commission was reorganized by the City and County to realign its mission with 2007 legislation that authorized preservation commissions to include heritage tourism in their purpose, and changed its name to the Heritage Tourism Council to reflect its expanded

role. The Council has a seven member advisory board and staff consists of the Heritage Preservation Officer, a part-time office worker, and numerous volunteers. The past and current Heritage Preservation Officer have written and administered a number of grants for historic preservation projects similar to the Fire Tower:

a) Green Meadow Ranch Building Restorations (2010)

The Council and partner Lewis & Clark Co. Historical Society administered a grant for the stabilization and rehabilitation of several structures at the historic Green Meadow Ranch, the headquarters of the influential Child family, who were pioneer entrepreneurs and ranchers. Concerned that a change in ownership might threaten the future of the decaying buildings at the historic ranch, The Council took up the challenge of negotiating a roof repair and restoration project involving three buildings with the private owner while securing funding from other sources to do the job. In addition, the services of contractors and qualified architects had to be secured to do a project that involved unique materials and workmanship skills. With these complex agreements in place, the project proceeded and was successfully completed but not without problems. Large wooden shake roof shingles had to be secured and molded into shape to conform to a faux thatch design. The group struggled with delays and a supplier bail-out that threatened the entire effort, but finally found a supplier and recycled shakes to secure enough of the necessary materials. To make the limited budget stretch to fit the ambitious project, the Council negotiated with the Montana Conservation Corps, who devised a training program that allowed their people to supply critically needed labor. Everyone involved gave something to the Green Meadow project, a spirit of compromise and dedication that was admirable.

b) Unionville Schoolhouse (2013-15)

The Council and partner Lewis & Clark Co. Historical Society took on the rehabilitation of the one-room Unionville Schoolhouse. With a \$4,000 grant, the partners and volunteers logged over 500 hours to scrape, paint and replace some rotted exterior siding and re-shingle the roof. The project started off with a hitch, when it was deemed a commercial structure by the County, and thus subject to compliance with lead-based paint laws. The Council worked with the grantor to extend the grant period to allow this hurdle to be crossed. The Heritage Preservation Officer (HPO) was trained in proper lead abatement procedures, became a certified lead removal contractor, and the project proceeded with the HPO with and supervised volunteers properly performing removal of lead-based paint from the exterior siding.

The project garnered incredible interest in the community, and an electrician stepped forward and donated labor and materials to replace the outdated electrical service. Donations of additional materials, including paint and brushes, allowed the project to come in under budget and \$200 was returned unused to the grantor. The rehabilitated school has become a gathering place for the community, who has embraced its role in their history as the school for the Whitlatch-Union Mine. The school is now the site of potlucks, music, art shows, weddings and other events, and the community is actively raising funds among itself to finance further improve the school, including restoring the historic bell and cupola, improving the kitchen area for gatherings (formerly the coatroom/vestibule) and repairing windows.

c) Helena Urban Renewal Project

This project began as a partnership between the Council and the County Historical Society, who realized that Helena was losing the people involved in the 1960s-1980s Urban Renewal project to relocation, dementia or death. The group decided to delve into the story before no one was left to testify as to what happened. The group had no budget for this project, but they put together a series of written,

filmed and displayed interpretations that captured more about the Urban Renewal phenomenon than anyone had ever done. In developing the history of Urban Renewal in Helena, the Council organized a team to collect information and interview participants. Using local contacts and friendships, team members logged many personal accounts of those years in which the city of Helena transformed itself using the Model Cities template. Stories came out that explained how events developed.

A collection of official documents was made from the remaining files supplied by those who directed Urban Renewal activities, and Helena Civic Television partnered in taping some of those interviews, which were eventually aired. Still operating without specific funds, the two groups applied for a small grant to build and erect displays illustrating their findings, and managed to fill an entire store space downtown. The project put an entirely new perspective on how this controversial program developed and played out, and how it affected not just downtown Helena's, but allowed the City to update city government, housing programs, health programs and social programs that are still in effect today.

Friends of the Fire Tower

The non-profit Friends of the Fire Tower formed in early 2018 in response to the 2016 Fire Tower crisis discussed above in the response to Criteria A, question #2. Friends of the Fire Tower was formed for the sole purpose of raising funds to ensure that the Fire Tower would be rehabilitated in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Accordingly, Friends of the Fire Tower does not have experience with similar projects, but looks forward to contributing the funds it has raised toward this project.

2. Describe your organization's most recent project, specifically identifying
 - any significant barriers or impediments and how your organization overcame them;
 - any project delays;
 - any changes to the budget.

City Parks Department:

In 2018 the City of Helena Parks and Recreation Department was awarded a Land Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant to upgrade a playground at Cherry Park in a design that would be accessible to all. The City partnered with the Helena Kiwanis Club, Helena's Playable Playgrounds, and received a grant from Montana State Parks for the project.

The project was delayed because the LWCF funding was not awarded according to schedule, but City Parks was able to reschedule construction until funding was received. One of the challenges of the project was scheduling the various construction components; the project included moving irrigation lines, excavating and grading the site, and pouring and curing the playground's concrete base. After the concrete was cured, a contractor installed the playground equipment, park staff installed the engineered wood fiber infrastructure, and a Kansas-based contractor arrived to install the "poured in place" surfacing. The project had a tight schedule due to the funding delay, but did not encounter any significant barriers or impediments. The weather cooperated, the project was completed in a timely manner within budget, and the finished playground has been a great asset to the community.

Helena/Lewis and Clark Co. Heritage Preservation and Tourism Development Council:

The Green Meadow Ranch and Unionville School projects described above discuss impediments and delays which were overcome by the Council and its partners. The Council's most recent project involved the reconstruction of two historic grave fences in the Silver City Cemetery. This project was funded by a grant that allowed the Council to hire a preservation contractor to reconstruct historic fences

surrounding two graves dating to the late 1880s that had rotted and weathered beyond repair. Between the time that the grant application was submitted and the grant was awarded, the contractor's knee was severely injured, requiring him to undergo months of rehabilitation before he could return to his job. The Council immediately contacted the grantor, and the grant period was extended a month to accommodate the contractor's recovery. The two grave fences were completed by the new deadline and installed in the cemetery, and were featured in a cemetery workshop sponsored by the Montana Heritage Foundation and the Montana Historical Society in September 2019.

3. If available, please provide a copy of your organization's most recent audit. Please discuss if there were any unresolved audit issues.

A copy of the City's most recent CAFR can be found at this link:

https://www.helenamt.gov/fileadmin/user_upload/Finance/Documents/Financial_Records_and_Reports/2019_CAFR_PDF_002.pdf. There were no unresolved audit issues.

STATUTORY CRITERIA - F

up to 250 in Possible Points

The degree to which the project has ongoing economic benefit to the state as a result of project completion.

1. Describe the ongoing economic impact of the proposed project to the local or regional area as a result of project completion.
2. Describe the ongoing economic impact of the proposed project to Montana as a result of project completion.
3. Describe if this project will enable future phases and detail how such subsequent work will provide an economic benefit as a result of project completion.
4. Please describe your long-term vision for the historic resource and explain how this project fits into organizational plans (strategic, interpretive, business, outreach, etc.).
 - a. Will this project decrease your operating costs, and, if applicable, how will those savings be reinvested?

1.-4. The rehabilitation of the Fire Tower will positively impact the condition and viability of the Helena and South-Central Historic Districts. The Districts' vitality is paramount to their ability to function as heritage tourism attractions. Well preserved structures draw visitors, and send the place that this unique place matters to the City, County and state of Montana. Helena is Montana's capitol city, and as such both residents and visitors have expectations of its appearance and the example it sets for other Montana communities. The City's treatment of its historic assets like the Fire Tower set an example for public and private owners of historic structures, and preservation of one structure has historically led to the preservations of others in similar communities throughout the United States. The Fire Tower project will hopefully have that same effect in Helena and Montana, and fuel local and statewide heritage tourism. Publicity generated by this project is good advertising for heritage tourism, and will spur new interest in the Fire Tower. It may also serve as an example to other Montana communities who have an historic structure that needs rehabilitation. Project completion will give another set of Montana

contractors experience in unique historic rehabilitation, a skill that they can use all throughout the state. Montana contains a dearth of preservation-trained contractors, and projects like this create a demand for preservation skills and open up new possibilities for skilled preservation contractors both locally and throughout the state.

This project will be completed in one phase during a single time period, so no subsequent work is planned. However, the City plans to maintain the Fire Tower on a regular regimen that will ensure that the work performed in this project lasts as long as possible.

The City's long-term vision is to continue to maintain and repair the Fire Tower as piece of Montana's territorial heritage for future generations of Helenans, Montanans and visitors. All of the City planning documents discussed in Criteria A, question 1 underscore the importance of historic assets as local and state heritage, as well as a draw for visitors and those choosing to relocate to Helena from outside the state. As discussed throughout this application, the Fire Tower is a key component of Helena's tourism brand, and proper repair and maintenance is crucial. Most visitors don't come to see replicas of historic structures; well-heeled geotourists in particular seek unique, genuine experiences in intact historic settings. Since Helena markets itself as such, it is important to properly care for its historic stock, which is exactly what this project will achieve.

This project will not necessarily decrease the City's operating costs, but it will simplify maintenance of the Fire Tower, as so many long-standing defects that were hastening decay and structural unsoundness will be remedied. Any savings can then be reinvested into routine maintenance and set aside for five and ten year repair cycles, as components of the tower are aging at different rates, depending on their age. As is often pointed out, historic structures like the Fire Tower have been repaired or had parts replaced over the years as their lifespan ended. Those parts themselves eventually become historic themselves. Any repairs to the Fire Tower that are over 50 years old have become historic themselves, and the repairs or reconstruction performed in this project will become historic in another 50 years.

This project will restore the tower to a healthy preservation baseline by repairing, restoring and removing identified components in accordance with the Standards, and by establishing a Standards-based protocol for inspection and maintenance. The Reports differ on recommended maintenance. The Anthony Report states that timber weathering and seasoning checks are not forms of deterioration, and recommends not applying coatings after rehabilitation. It recommends 1) installing/inspecting borate rods in select timbers every 5 years; 2) painting the cabin to protect the wood; 3) annually inspecting the timbers and removing debris that accumulates in checks; 4) clearing vegetation to reduce fire hazard and wetting of timbers; and 5) inspecting the cabin on a 3-5 year cycle for loose nails and boards, and painting and replacing roof covering as needed. The BCE Report advises: 1) 5-year cycle, a. applying FPL Water Repellent Log Oil Mix to all wood after FPL has been initially applied at the 2-year mark; b. closely observing and assessing conditions and promptly addressing deterioration, prioritizing repair work and not filling cracks/checks or using consolidation products; 2) 10-year cycle includes in-place repair of any deteriorated members, and replacement if absolutely necessary.

The tower is a crucial component of Helena's historic downtown as well as the South-Central neighborhood. Helena's downtown viewscape is identifiable by this unique structure, much as Butte is identified by its headframes and New York City by the Empire State and Chrysler buildings. Walk into any Helena art gallery/gift shop and you see photographs or other artistic medium featuring the Fire Tower. Local businesses have incorporated it into their name and products, and even Helena's manhole covers display it. Helena's tourism industry relies heavily on the draw of Helena's history and largely intact

downtown. The tower is a symbol of this western community, and has been the focal point of many photos and selfies taken by national and international visitors. Business websites feature the tower and Helena tourism entities' social media pages are splashed with its image. Allowing the tower to decay until it is demolished or replaced with a reproduction would be a huge loss to the community's identity and sense of place. This project ensures that the tower continues to grace Helena's skyline and draw tourists in a historically accurate and structurally sound manner

Sample Project Budget

Please adjust the budget rows and columns to accurately reflect the use of MHPG and matching MHPG funding that will contribute to the completion of project activities.

BUDGET for: <u>City of Helena Fire Tower Rehabilitation</u>				
Date: _____				
(Project Title)				
	SOURCE: MHPG	SOURCE: Match (Identify)	SOURCE:	TOTAL
Professional Consultant Activities		9,000	RMRH grant	9,000
Permitting		3,000	RMRH grant	3,000
Construction Costs	25,226	58,000	RMRH grant	83,226
Building Materials		80,000	Soroptimists; Jerry Metcalf Fdn.	80,000
Other (Describe)		6,774		6,774
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET	\$25,226	\$156,774	\$	\$182,000

Sample Implementation Schedule

Please adjust the Implementation schedule of tasks to accurately reflect the completion of project activities.

TASK	MONTH / YEAR
ADVERTISEMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	
Publish RFP	Jan. 2021
Select firm	Apr. 2021
Professional services Draw	July 2021
MAJOR ACTIVITIES/MILESTONES (BELOW ARE EXAMPLES. PLEASE CHANGE AS NECESSARY FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT.)	
Construction bidding	Jan. 2021
Select contractor	March 2021
Construction	July 2021
Substantial completion	Sept. 2021
Project Closeout	Sept. 30, 2021
Drawdowns	
Submit draft report and request first drawdown of funds	July 2021
Submit final report and request final drawdown of funds	Sept. 2021

Environmental Overview

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE PROJECT IS EXEMPT FROM MEPA REVIEW AND PUBLIC HEARING SUBMISSION WILL BE SUBMITTED PRIOR TO MAY 1, 2020.

Montana Historic Preservation Grants are a state action subject to the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). MEPA specifies three different levels of environmental review, based on the significance of the potential impacts. The levels are: (1) exempt or excluded from MEPA review; (2) environmental assessment (EA), and (3) environmental impact statement (EIS). The following outlines the environmental review process that must be completed by the applicant for each project proposed for MHPG funding.

For detailed information on MEPA, see *A Guide to the Montana Environmental Policy Act*, or *A Citizen's Guide to Public Participation in Environmental Decision Making*, at:

<http://leg.mt.gov/css/Publications/environmental/default.asp> or

<http://leg.mt.gov/css/services%20division/lepo/mepa/mepaforpublic.asp>

All necessary environmental review of the proposed project is recommended to be completed prior to submission of the application for grant funding. Any application received without documentation that the environmental review process has been completed, must complete the environmental review process and submit documentation to Commerce no later than May 1, 2020 or risk being determined incomplete by Commerce.

To document completion of the environmental review process the applicant must follow Appendix B on our website. Applicant must provide documentation of the completed environmental review process and include with all documentation of the public review process, including but not limited to, the public notice for and minutes of a public hearing at which the environmental review was discussed, the public comments received, and the final decision on the environmental determination made during a public meeting. In order to complete the environmental review process the applicant may need to complete Appendix B-1 and B-2.

Please refer to our website for Appendix B, B-1, and B-2 to document the environment review process, including the Environmental Review Form and the Environmental Review Checklist. <https://comdev.mt.gov/Programs-and-Boards/Montana-Historic-Preservation-Grant>